

Dog Fouling

I know it's not a nice subject but I find myself getting increasingly annoyed by silly comments made by people in an attempt to justify why they don't pick up their dogs mess.

Like most people I used to believe that the worst thing about dog poo was stepping in it or getting it on the wheels of pushchairs or bikes but after some research I've discovered there is a far more sinister consequence and **there is no such thing as leaving dog poo to break down "naturally"**.

Things you should know

The eggs from roundworms, *Toxocara Canis*, are deposited with the faeces and embryonate (becoming infectious) 2-3 weeks later. **They can be viable for up to 10 years in the soil** and are resistant to disinfectants and to the frost.

Each *Toxocara Canis* female can lay 700 eggs per day and are only visible under a powerful microscope. If ingested by humans and untreated can cause infections to your organs most commonly the brain (nervous system), liver, lungs and your eyes causing tumours and detached retinas and can lead to blindness.

Dog poo does not act as a fertilizer, when it breaks down it leaves toxins in the ground which are harmful to other animals, humans and the environment. In the past farmers have been blamed for poisoning the land and rivers but it has now been proved that leaving dog waste on farm land can lead to sheep being infected with Canine worms, which doesn't have an adverse effect on the sheep but if humans then eat the infected meat can lead to cysts on the liver and lungs which have to be removed surgically.

Dog poo being left to wash into rivers and seas is the equivalent of pumping our raw sewage into the water.

It is estimated that **20-30% of stream pollution is caused by the toxins from dog waste** being washed in to the water system causing a build-up in algae which is harmful to fish and by infecting the water with E-Coli, leading to the closure of some beaches.

It has been estimated that for watersheds of up to 20 square miles draining to small coastal bays, 2 -3 days of faeces from a population of 100 dogs would contribute enough bacteria and nutrients to close a bay to swimming (US EPA, 1993)

In America and Canada scientist are investigating ways to get a useful end product from dog waste, be it fertilizer or energy, a much better option than landfill.

As one learned journalist said "If you think stepping in it is bad, try drinking it!" Makes you think doesn't it.